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ABSTRACT

Negotiated Tuition is a program, appropriate to private schools, in which a school representative discusses in an interview with parents what the school provides, what the per pupil costs are, and what the parents feel they can afford to pay in tuition. It is assumed that parents enroll their children in nonpublic schools because they believe it is in the best interest of the children, and that if they understand the costs for the option they have chosen they will be willing to pay more for it. The success of the program depends on a positive public relations effort and trained, personable negotiators. (Author/PGD)

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ALTERNATIVE TUITION PLANS FOR YOUR HIGH SCHOOL

BROTHER FOSTER ZIBILICH

Let me outline briefly what I plan to do today during this presentation and discussion. First, I would like to spend some twenty to thirty minutes explaining to you what we call the Denver Plan for negotiated support of our schools in the Archdiocese of Denver.

Then I would entertain questions and comments on my presentation, together with your input for other alternative methods of tuition that you may be using, or be aware of.

In the many talks around the country that I or our secondary school director gives, we have what amounts to a solemn pledge to give the credit for this idea to the person who rightly deserves this credit: that is, Father Edmund Olley, who fathered and nurtured this plan from its conception to its full blown maturity. Last July God saw fit to call Ed to his reward. Ed died after suffering greatly and heroically of cancer. Never have Catholic schools had a more loyal supporter than Ed Olley. May he rest in peace!

"We wish to declare our belief in the future of our schools, to offer renewed encouragement to all collaborators in the school apostolate, to call attention to signs of progress and hope, to point to new areas for investigation and action, and to do all in a spirit of realistic hopefulness." (Teach Them: A Statement of the Catholic Bishops on Catholic Schools, United States Catholic Conference).

The Negotiated Tuition or Negotiated Support Plan takes into consideration the above statement when we point out some basic assumptions.

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1. Catholic schools are here and here to stay.
2. Catholic parents will support Catholic schools.
3. People have a need to give.
4. Dollars do what you want them to do.

Perhaps here is the place to submit our definition of negotiated tuition.

"Negotiated Tuition is a program in which a school official discusses in an interview what parents feel they can afford to pay in tuition. The negotiator discusses the per pupil costs and assists the parents in making a financial commitment."

Before a Negotiated Tuition Program can successfully be instituted a Public Relations program must be instituted. Realistically, each and every school is in the selling business. In each instance the school must sell its wares to the prospective buyers.

It is important to do this--we must advertize before we even attempt to open the store.

It is important to use all the professional services and advice available. A well planned program reaching all the various publics is essential. We must tell and show people how good we really are - and we are - let's quit being defensive - let's toot our own horns. Striking our breasts too often causes unnecessary pain.

Basically, P. R. means exude optimism; it means being happy about our schools; it means spreading Good News - and isn't that what Gospel means?

During this P. R. program - and it is an ongoing 365 days a year program - we discuss with parents our methods of financing and prepare ourselves to discuss priorities with parents.

PARENT'S PRIORITIES

Negotiated Tuition provides parents the opportunity to rethink some of their priorities or commitments. It is not the negotiator's responsibility to question these priorities, but it can be the negotiator's role to discuss it with them. Most parents want to do what is best for their children. They want their children in Catholic schools (for whatever reason) or they wouldn't be enrolling them. The assumption can be made that they will pay more because they understand the costs of things. Parents often change priorities once we have shown them our own confidence in our schools. We need fewer and fewer voices of doom. Cassandra's should not come in our doors.

INTERVIEW

Now some nuts and bolts to our plan. Each family who will have students in the school comes in for a registration interview. At this interview, curriculum and other school matters of concern can be discussed.

Simplifying the process of the interview - here is what takes place -

1. Parents are told the actual cost per pupil of the school, and
2. They agree on how much of that cost they will commit themselves to pay.

It might be appropriate for the Registration to be handled as one phase and Negotiated Tuition Interviews as the second phase, and perhaps by different people. Local circumstances will dictate the method. Interviewing is a big job and is as important as it is big. Parents will discuss the negotiations of tuition with some one who has been trained in this procedure. It usually takes between 10 and 20 minutes for each interview.

There are two important aspects of Negotiated Tuition:

- a) the success of the public relations
- b) the personality of the negotiator

The negotiator must possess characteristics which you would want if you were the parents being negotiated.

NEGOTIATORS

It is not essential who negotiates such as priests, sisters, lay - men or women. What is essential is that they have the qualifications. No one is a good or bad negotiator by virtue of their station in life or sex. Popular, honest, sincere, dedicated, enthusiastic, warm, happy, mature, knowledgeable, responsible, understanding, serious and committed. They should be like the salesman you want to wait on you. The "Vibes" must be right. We must avoid people who do not have most of these characteristics.

DO'S

1. Make appointments if you feel this is necessary (it is not always necessary).
2. Give them as much time as necessary - usually 10-20 minutes is ample time.
3. Establish a good rapport by greeting them warmly, shaking hands, etc.
4. Review the educational program briefly to set the stage (no time for humility).
5. Talk about kids, especially their kids. They love it.
6. Compliments are appropriate.

DON'TS

1. Don't rush
2. Don't be fatalistic.

3. Don't think small.
4. Don't be condescending.
5. Don't make people wait.
6. Don't High pressure.

The physical set-up can best be developed by each school. However, all should consider these points:

1. Place - adequate room - to not only assure confidentiality but room to move around, appropriate signs if necessary such as name of negotiator as well as sign leading to the place. Chairs for waiting should be available.
2. Hosts and Hostesses - There should be enough people acting as hosts and hostesses so that people will feel comfortable. Attend to any need they might have. Coffee, tea, other drinks, cookies might be in order. Happy and friendly hosts are very important, they assist in setting the stage for negotiation.

TIME

Most schools use Sunday morning after the masses with follow-up times on weekday evenings - about 6:30 - 8:30.

CONCLUSION

1. This is a basic outline of what is meant by the idea of Negotiated Tuition.
2. It is a concept which makes sense if you think about it for a while.
3. It attempts to respond to the various uniquenesses of each school or locality.
4. Two important keys for success are: an excellent public relations program and the negotiator.

5. People who have used this method are tremendously excited by it.
6. It not only increases revenue from 20 to 200 per cent, but in most cases increases enrollment.

This complete plan called "The Archdiocese of Denver - Negotiated Tuition Plan" is available for \$2.50. Send your request and money to:

Archdiocesan School Office
200 Josephine Street
Denver, Colorado 80206